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ABSTRACT

Two books that use documentary photography to examine social problems--"You Have Seen Their Faces," a 1937 study of Southern sharecroppers by Margaret Bourke-White and Erskine Caldwell, and "An American Exodus," a 1939 examination of the migration of farm families by Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor--are compared in this paper. After relating the purpose and field methods of each of the sets of authors, the paper discusses the photographs, captions, and texts of the books, notes reviewers' reactions, and offers a critique of each book as a whole. It then compares the two books with respect to the elements previously discussed. The paper concludes that (1) Bourke-White and Caldwell destroyed their credibility by making the sharecroppers seem excessively pathetic and wretched, and (2) Lange and Taylor conveyed more information than the other authors, but their book has little emotional impact. It asserts that Bourke-White and Caldwell wanted readers to pity sharecroppers and see how wretched they were, while Lange and Taylor wanted readers to respect and understand their subjects. (GT)

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A COMPARISON OF DOCUMENTARY APPROACHES:

Margaret Bourke-White and Erskine Caldwell, Authors of You Have Seen Their Faces, and Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor, Authors of An American Exodus

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BACKGROUND

Documentary photography and documentary books combining words and photographs came of age in the United States during the 1930's. The Depression provided the impetus for photographic documentaries of social problems. Six documentary books combining words and photographs were published from 1937 through 1941. These were the core of what A.D. Coleman called "a true flowering of the (photo-text) genre" between 1935 and 1945 (MacLeish, 1977, Introduction).

Documentary photography which examines social problems was first used in the U.S. by Jacob Riis, a crusading newspaper reporter. In the late 1880's, Riis began using the camera to expose the squalid living conditions of immigrants in New York City's slums. He published the first documentary book combining words and pictures, How the Other Half Lives, in 1890. Woodcuts from his photographs were used to illustrate his text in this exposé of New York City's overcrowded, filthy tenements and flophouses.

The next major effort to use documentary photography to examine a social problem was undertaken by Lewis W. Hine. In 1908, Hine began making photographs for the National Child Labor Committee to document the exploitation of children who worked in mines and textile mills, factories and the city streets. His

photographs helped persuade legislators and the voting public of the need for child labor laws. Hine also documented the efforts of the Red Cross to alleviate suffering in Europe during and after World War I.

During the Depression years of the 1930's, photographers again turned their attention to social problems. As a part of its "Life and Circumstances" series, Fortune published a 1936 photo essay: "Family on Relief: The Life and Circumstances of Steve Hatalla, Who Lost His Job Four Years Ago." And in 1934, Margaret Bourke-White covered the drought in the Great Plains states for Fortune.

While other photographers were becoming involved in social issues, the major photographic documentary effort of the 1930's was carried out by the Historical Section of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) headed by Roy Stryker. The Historical Section was established in 1935 as a part of the Resettlement Administration (RA), which underwent a name change from the RA to the FSA in 1937. Like Riis who exposed slum conditions and Hine who exposed child labor practices, the FSA photographers documented the plight of the farmers caused by the Depression and drought. The FSA photographers also documented the efforts of the government to cure the problems and alleviate the hardship in rural America, like Hine who promoted the efforts of the Red Cross.

Of the six documentary books which examined social problems related to the Depression, three used photographs selected from the FSA files. Archibald MacLeish used 88 photographs, 62 (70%) from the FSA, in Land of the Free (1938) to convey the frustration

of the people during the 1937 "Roosevelt Recession." Herman C. Nixon used 149 photographs, all from the FSA, to examine the Southern agricultural system in Forty Acres and Steel Mules (1938). Richard Wright's 12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States (1941) used 88 photographs selected by Edwin Rosskam; 82 (93%) were from the FSA.

The other three documentary books were co-authored by photographer-writer teams. Two of the books were co-authored by photographers who worked for the FSA, Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans. The third was co-authored by Fortune and advertising photographer Margaret Bourke-White. You Have Seen Their Faces (1937) by Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White showed the plight of the Southern sharecropper. An American Exodus (1939) by Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor studied the migration of farm families. Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (1941) by James Agee and Walker Evans examined three Alabama tenant farm families.

This paper examines the documentary team of Caldwell and Bourke-White and that of Lange and Taylor and their respective books. The documentary books using FSA file photographs were not chosen for study because I am interested in clarifying the development of the documentary book in which the photographs and the words are new - products of work in the field. Let Us Now Praise Famous Men was not selected because Agee and Evans so delibrately broke the mold of the documentary book.

DOCUMENTARY APPROACH

By examining the documentary approach of a photographer-

writer team, we can better understand the effect of their purpose and field methods on their resulting publication. By comparing the documentary approaches of two teams (Caldwell & Bourke-White and Lange & Taylor) we can better understand how different purposes and field methods affected the photographs, captions and text in their respective books.

Purposes: Bourke-White and Caldwell

Margaret Bourke-White began her photographic career as an architectural photographer in Cleveland in 1927. She developed a reputation as an excellent industrial photographer and within two years Henry Luce asked her to work for the new Fortune magazine. By 1933 Bourke-White had developed an lucrative advertising photography business and employed an eight-person studio staff. Although she was accepting fewer Fortune assignments, she agreed to cover the drought on the Great Plains in 1934. It changed her life.

Bourke-White wrote:

> I was deeply moved by the suffering I saw. . . . I think this was the beginning of my awareness of people in a human, sympathetic sense as subjects for the camera and photographed against a wider canvas than I had perceived before. During the rapturous period when I was discovering the beauty of industrial shapes, people were only incidental to me, and in retrospect I believe I had not too much feeling for them in my earlier work. But suddenly it was people who counted. . . . Here were faces engraved with the very paralysis of despair. These were faces I could not pass by (Bourke-White, 1963. p. 110).

"She produced no notable pictures of the suffering farmers," but it was an experience she could not forget (Callahan, 1972, p. 48). Bourke-White went back to her advertising photography

business, but she was growing increasingly dissatisfied.

A turning point came when an advertising executive suggested photographing a real tire instead of the increasingly fatter imitations. Bourke-White thought:

> I longed to see the real world which lay beyond the real tire, where things did not have to look convincing, they just had to be true. I felt I could never again face a shiny automobile stuffed with vapid smiles (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 112).

Then she had a dream in which she was being chased by the cars she had been photographing and awoke on the floor writhing with a strained back. She resolved to get out of advertising photography.

She wanted to take an in-depth book approach independent of a regular job. This was "based on a great need to understand my fellow Americans better" (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 113). But she did not know what the theme of the book should be. She wanted to collaborate with a writer, but she did not know what kind of writer to look for.

Bourke-White was looking for an idea for a book. Erskine Caldwell provided that idea.

According to William Stott, author of Documentary Expression and Thirties America, Caldwell

> had written a great deal of fiction - Tobacco Road, God's Little Acre, Kneel to the Rising Sun - and a good deal of reportage about the sharecropper. He wanted to "show that the fiction I was writing was authentically based on contemporary life in the South" and felt that to do this his book "should be thoroughly documented with photographs taken on the scene" (Stott, 1973, p. 216).

Sean Callahan, editor of The Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White, agreed:

Erskine Caldwell wanted to do a non-fiction book with

> photographs on the sharecropping system to counter criticism of Tobacco Road, his novel and stage play about sharecroppers. Many felt that the picture of Southern life he presented was overdrawn (Callahan, 1972, p. 91).

Bourke-White heard that Caldwell was looking for a photographer to collaborate with him on his book project. She said Caldwell "wanted to do a book with pictures that would show the authenticity of the people and conditions about which he wrote. He wanted to take the camera to Tobacco Road" (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 113).

She arranged for an introduction and they agreed to work together. However, the purpose of the book was clearly Caldwell's. He decided on the title, You Have Seen Their Faces, two years before they met. He revealed the title to Bourke-White in their publisher's office as they finished the project (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 137).

Bourke-White was receptive to Caldwell's ideas. The purpose of the book would be to show the pathetic faces and the deplorable conditions of the Southern sharecroppers.

Purpose: Lange and Taylor

Dorothea Lange opened her first portrait studio in 1919 and became a successful portrait photographer in San Francisco. But,

> In 1932, in the depth of the Depression, when at least fourteen million people were out of work, Dorothea felt "the discrepency between what I was working on in the printing frames and what was going on in the street was more than I could assimilate. I knew that if my intereests in people were valid, I would not be doing only what was in those printing frames" (Meltzer, 1978, p. 70).

From her studio window Lange could watch the unemployed drift by. Often they would stop and try to decide where to go next. One

day Lange told herself, "I'd better make this happen" (Meltzer & Cole, 1974, p. 74).

Like Bourke-White, Lange was motivated to leave her studio by the suffering she saw. But, Lange didn't wait for someone to provide her with an idea. She started photographing the unemployed, the demonstrations and the strikes during any free time.

Lange also made the transition to documenting people on her own. As a portrait photographer, she had always considered people to be important, unlike Bourke-White. But adapting to conditions outside the studio was a challenge for Lange. Her son Daniel Dixon wrote:

> Before, she had been able to arrange her subjects, but now she had to train herself to select them; before she had been concerned chiefly with detail, now she was also concerned with situation (Meltzer, 1978, p. 71).

Yet, on her first day photographing in the streets she made her famous "White Angel Breadline" photograph.

In 1934, Lange met Paul S. Taylor, an associate professor of economics at University of California at Berkley and a consultant on migrant problems to the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA). He saw her work at a gallery and contacted her about using one of her photographs with a strike article he had written for Survey Graphic. Later, Taylor arranged for a group of photographers, including Lange, to document a self-help cooperative for the unemployed. Impressed with her work, Taylor convinced his superiors at the SERA of the need for a photographer to document migrant conditions. Lange was hired in 1935, but she was listed as a clerk-stenographer because there was no authorization for a photographer.

Initially, Lange worked as part of a team with Taylor and several other men. Soon she was taking her own notes and interviewing in addition to photographing. Taylor issued reports called "Notes from the Field" using text and her photographs complete with quotations from the migrants as captions.

In the summer of 1935, Lange was transferred to the Historical Section of the RA under Roy Stryker. She worked for the RA and its successor the FSA until 1939. Lange travelled throughout California and across most of the southern half of the U.S., sometimes alone, but often with Taylor who she married in December 1935.

In 1938, Lange decided to work on a documentary book. Two things seem to have influenced her decision. First, Stryker had laid her off so she could work for herself that summer. Second, two documentary books had just been published. You Have Seen Their Faces was the product of a team approach to a social problem. Archibald Macleish's Land of the Free used 88 photographs, 82 of them from the FSA, and 33 of them taken by Lange. Stryker was complementary about the photographs in Land of the Free and Pare Lorentz praised Lange's photographs.

> Such publicly voiced enthusiasm for her role in the book may have crystallized Dorothea's desire to publish a group of photographs around the theme of farm families on the move. For three years she had been photographing migrants in many parts of the country. No one had made a richly detailed a record. On this summer field trip she would have the freedom to photograph whatever would fill in gaps in the story or strengthen material already in hand. The idea for the book was her own, but inevitably she saw it as a collaboration with her husband. It was not to be a book soely of photographs. Schooled in Paul Taylor's method of collaboration between social scientist and photographer, she saw it as a picture-text presentation of a social issue. In Taylor's words, the message would

> be: "These people are worth helping! They are down and out, but they are not the dregs of society. They've just hit bottom that's all" (Meltzer, 1978, pp. 185-186).

Unlike Bourke-White, Lange developed her own idea for a book. Lange's professional and personal relationship with Taylor helped shape her idea for a book on the migrants. Taylor did provide her with background on the migrant problem and his "Notes from the Field," combining text, photographs and captions, were forerunners of the book project. However, their views developed over three years of working together with input from both Lange and Taylor.

Both the purpose of the book and their collaboration on the project were a natural extension of their work together. The purpose was to present information about a social problem, the migration of farm families, and to convey the need to take action. Their purpose was more informational and academic than the purpose of Caldwell and Bourke-White. Lange and Taylor's point of view was different too. They wanted to show their subjects as strong and wronged, or at least with a simple dignity, rather than pitiful and pathetic.

Field Methods: Bourke-White and Caldwell

Bourke-White's documentary approach to people was unformed when she began working with Caldwell. Her forte was the dramatic, graphic composition of industrial scenes. She had only recently decided she wanted to be more sensitive to people. Now Caldwell would introduce her to the Southern sharecroppers.

As they started to travel across the South in June, 1937, Bourke-White thought: "I longed for the time, which I was sure

was not far away, when my horizon would be widened by looking through the eyes of another" (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 124).

On the fifth day of the trip Caldwell told Bourke-White that he didn't think they were accomplishing anything and that they should give up the project. Bourke-White wrote:

> I tried desperately to tell him how much this meant to me, this opportunity to do something worthwhile, but I wasn't making much sense, because, of course, I was crying. Then suddenly something very unexpected happened. He fell in love with me. From then onward, everything worked out beautifully (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 125)

During their summer-long field trip Caldwell and Bourke-White developed their field methods. Bourke-White was very receptive to Caldwell's way of working. They developed an approach based on Caldwell's ability to engage the sharecroppers in conversation.

While Caldwell talked, Bourke-White said:

> I lurked in the background, with a small camera, not stealing pictures exactly, which I seldom do, but working on general scenes as unobtrusively as possible. Once Erskine and a farmer had reached a kind of rapport, I could close in quite freely for portraits, and perhaps we would be invited into the tiny one-room sharecropper's home, which gave me a chance to photograph an interior (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 126).

Caldwell had another useful ability. He could adjust his speech to imitate the dialects in different parts of the South. Bourke-White wrote:

> The people we were seeking out for pictures were generally suspicious of strangers. They were afraid we were going to sell them something they didn't want and fearful we were taking their pictures only to ridicule them. Reassuring them was a very important part of our operations, and a reassuring voice in their own mode of speech eliminated many a barrier. Of course, no amount of doctoring could disguise my mode of speech. I was unmistakeably a Yankee, "down South on her vacation," Erskine would say (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 126).

There is a more subjective part of their field methods. In the "Notes on Photographs" section of You Have Seen Their Faces Bourke-White wrote:

> Flash bulbs provide the best means I know, under poor lighting conditions of letting your subject talk away until just that expression which you wish to capture crosses his face. Sometimes I would set up the camera in a corner of the room, sit some distance away from it with a remote control in my hand, and watch our people while Mr. Caldwell talked with them. It might be an hour before their faces or gestures gave us what we were trying to express, but the instant it occurred the scene was imprisioned on a sheet of film before they knew what had happened. (Caldwell & Bourke-White, 1937, p. 187).

Bourke-White was describing photographing their preconceived ideas. In this context, the conversation was not a process to gain information or insight. Instead, it was a method to gain access to photographic subjects.

The purpose of their book was to show pitiful sharecroppers and the deplorable condition of their lives. The purpose of their field methods was to find likely subjects, engage them in conversation, put them at ease and wait until their expression was pitiful enough, until it matched Caldwell and Bourke-White's purpose.

Bourke-White talked about the importance of understanding and insight, but this is how she described photographing Holiness Church:

> There is a white counterpart (to Negro Churches) which fewer people know, furtive, shamefaced and hidden. . . . We made our great find on a Sunday morning. Everyone was already in church. I tucked a small camera into my jacket, and Erskine filled his pockets with flashbulbs. Finding the church door locked from the inside, we leaped through the open window and started taking pictures at once, Erskine changing flashbulbs as though he had been assisting a photographer all his life.
>
> It was a strange little scene. Women were careening about in their cotton print dresses, and several times

> they nearly threw me off my feet and all but knocked my camera out of my hands as they waved their Bibles and shrieked their "Praise Be's.". . . (The people were whipped into a religious frenzy, but finially it began to die down.) The minister was beginning to stir in his coma. Plainly the time had come to leave. We sailed through the windows the way we had come in, and in a matter of minutes we were out of town. . . .
>
> Long after the excitement of jumping through the church windows to get the pictures has mellowed down in memory, I find myself thinking of that bleak and splintery church on its plot of stony ground. The pitiful masquerade of religion I witnessed there has left its vivid image deep in my mind. It is obvious this shoddy little ceremonial re-enacted each week in the name of religion, was the very anthesis of religion (Bourke-White, 1963, pp. 133-134).

In the next paragraph Bourke-White states: "here with the sharecroppers, I was learning that to understand another human being you must gain some insight into the conditions which make him what he is" (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 134). Bourke-White asserted that she gained insight through her experience at Holiness Church. For her the

> shoddy little ceremonial. . . . illuminates the spiritual poverty of people who have no other emotional release, no relaxation and laughter, no movies or books and, far worse, no educational or other inner equipment with which to change the course of their meaningless lives (Bourke-White, 1963, p. 134).

However, Bourke-White's actions contradict her words. People who are trying to gain insight do not jump into a church through the window after the service has started, take photographs with flash bulbs and complain about members of the congregation bumping into them when they are the intruders. People who are trying to understand do not jump back out of the church window before the service is over and leave town immediately without even interviewing anyone. The loaded phrases Bourke-White used also contradict her statements about insight and understanding. The

church service was described as a "pitiful masquerade of religion" and as a "shoddy little ceremonial." She described the sharecroppers as having "meaningless lives." In her words and especially in her actions, Bourke-White not only failed to try to understand, she even failed to show simple respect.

Caldwell and Bourke-White's field methods showed a pattern of looking for their preconceived ideas and failing to try to understand or to respect their subjects. They were looking for pathetic faces, wretched lives and deplorable conditions. People became subjects they could manipulate to arouse pity.

Field Methods: Lange and Taylor

Lange developed a field approach to people during her years documenting the victims of the Depression in the streets of San Francisco. She would go to a location consistent with her sympathies (with the unemployed, the strikers, etc.) and just wait, not interacting and making no effort to hide her camera, until people began to ignore her presence. Then she would begin making photographs (Meltzer, 1978, pp. 85-86).

When Lange and Taylor began working together, she observed his method of interviewing:

> She was absorbed in the way he drew facts and feelings from people without their being aware of how much they were telling him. . . . She saw how eager most people are to talk to strangers, and "especially if they are talking about themselves, about their own experience, their own involvement" (Meltzer, 1978, pp. 87-88).

On her first assignment for the SERA Taylor told Lange it was

all right if she did not make a single photograph her first day.

> When they got to Nipomo, she went straight to the migrants and started taking pictures. Right from the beginning, Taylor said, she showed she could use not only her eye but her ear. Their first times out she would take pictures and talk with people, listening intently to what they said, then sidle over to Taylor and repeat what she'd heard as he scribbled it down in his notebook (Meltzer, 1978, p. 95).

The method Taylor used to initiate interviews was similar to that used by Caldwell:

> To secure useful interviews and photographs it was essential to win the confidence of the migrants. Taylor's approach was casual and indirect. He'd get out of his car, walk over to the people, and put a simple question, such as, "How far is it to the next town?" After they answered him it was easy to ask, "What's the work going on here?" And then, "Where do the people come from who do the work?" He wanted to avoid any suspicion that he was an agent intending harm. After a series of such questions, people would sometimes begin to wonder why he wanted to know so much, and they'd start to question him. He would immediately explain he was from the State Relief Administration and had been asked to find out the conditions and what the people said about their conditions. People accepted him and his staff in that role (Meltzer, 1978, p. 96).

Lange, like Bourke-White, waited quietly during the interviews and made photographs unless the people objected. "The interviewer would keep the talk going, making it easier for her to work unobtrusively" (Meltzer, 1978, p. 96).

The difference is that Lange and Taylor were more interested in what the migrants said. They were gathering information to be used in government reports. Quotations as well as photographs were used to humanize the statistics.

Another difference is that Lange learned to work alone approaching the migrants, photographing them and gathering information and quotations for captions:

> Her method was to walk up to the migrants, look around quietly, wait until they appeared to be used to her and wouldn't mind, and then take pictures. Sometimes she did it while talking with them, sometimes not (Meltzer, 1978, p. 96).

A third difference was that Lange and Taylor treated their subjects with respect:

> What made her successful was her natural skill in relations with people, an ability to put them at ease, to make them feel she cared. She would never intrude her camera upon anyone's privacy. If a person refused to be photographed she would not find some sneaky way to shoot him. If nothing was said but she felt unwelcome, she would fool around with her equipment or just go sit down in a corner and let them look her over. She was aware that some people withdrew because they felt she did not belong with them. Tactfully then she would speak to them about who she was and what her family was like, where she came from, what she represented, so that she told them much about herself, and truthfully. Then, if she asked questions, it was a fair exchange. It took more time to work that way, but she thought it a human way of meeting her fellows on the same level (Meltzer, 1978, pp. 96-97).

Taylor provided Lange with background and opportunity. Beaumont Newhall wrote:

> Paul Taylor helped Dorothea to grasp the economic and sociological background of agricultural workers, and this knowledge she brought to her photography. "I suppose I did do some explaining," Paul wrote me, ". . . what it now seems that I did most importantly was to enable Dorothea to confront the situation herself, firsthand" (Lange, 1967, pp. 6-7).

Lange credited Taylor with teaching her a lot about how to be a perceptive social observer. She also said that, during the field trips with Taylor, she learned the discipline she needed to handle her often long and broadly-based or vague assignments (Meltzer & Cole, 1974, pp. 76-77).

Lange had mixed feelings about researching her subject:

> Usually she didn't read up on her subject before going out, but did so while on the job. The most fruitful

> research, however, came after she had returned from the field. She preferred to follow her instincts, rather than let study influence her beforehand. That way she might discover what had been neglected or unknown. She tried to open herself as wide as she could, to be herself, "like a piece of unexposed, sensitized material. . . . To know ahead what you're looking for means you're only photographing your own preconceptions, which is very limiting and often false" (Meltzer & Cole, 1974, pp. 77-78).

On the other hand, before a 1937 field trip which would cover tenant farming she wrote Roy Stryker:

> "My work on migrantory labor has taught me the importance of adequate background when working on a large theme. . . . my first concern is to obtain sufficient background for understanding of the problems. I shall need all the education that can be injected.". . . She asked for copies of Wallace speeches and department reports on tenancy, and began reading Arthur Raper's Preface to Peasantry, a new study of tenancy in Georgia (Meltzer, 1978, pp. 170-171).

However, Lange and Taylor usually didn't plan their field trips in detail. They might have some planned stops, such as a FSA project or an area of drought. Most of the time they would head through the approved states and stop whenever they saw something worth investigating (Meltzer, 1978, p. 142).

The intent of Lange and Taylor's field methods was to gather information, both written and photographic. Lange, the photographer, and Taylor, the social scientist, sought to understand the individual migrants and how they fit into the larger problem of the migration of farm families. Their field methods treated the migrants with respect. Sometimes Lange tried to rid herself of preconceived ideas, except for their shared point of view that the migrants were worth helping.

THE BOOKS

By examining the photographs, captions, and text of a documentary book we can understand the effects of the authors' documentary approach on the individual components of the book and on the book as a whole. By comparing the photographs, captions, and text of You Have Seen Their Faces with those of An American Exodus, we can better understand how and why the authors' different purposes and field methods produced different effects.

Photographs: You Have Seen Their Faces

William Stott was critical of Bourke-White for photographing her preconceived ideas and he is critical of the photographs which are the result:

> She got from her subjects the look she wanted. The look: mournful, plaintive, nakedly near tears (Stott, 1973, p. 60).
>
> Bourke-White made her subjects' faces and gestures say what she wanted them to. And what she wanted to say is blantant on every page. Faces of defeat, their eyes wizened with pain - or large, puzzled, dazzled, plaintive; people at their most abject: a ragged woman photographed on her rotted mattress, a palsied child, a woman with a goiter the size of a grapefruit; twisted mouths (ten of them), eyes full of tears. . . . No dignity seem left them (Stott, 1973, p. 220)

F. Jack Hurley, author of Portrait of A Decade, wrote that You Have Seen Their Faces:

> was exploitive. The photographs, and the writing as well, often descended to levels of taste that would have been foreign to FSA photographers. Physical deformities of photographic subjects were sometimes played upon (Hurley, 1972, p. 137).

However, the photographs were highly praised in most of the contemporary book reviews. Malcom Cowley, writing in The New

Republic, said: "The photographs themselves are almost beyond praise" (Cowley, 1937, p. 78). Writing for The New York Times, Ralph Thompson said: "'In Margaret Bourke-White's full-page photographs. . . . is as arresting a statement of the plight of the Southern tenant farmer as we have ever had'" (Brown, 1972, p. 75). Hudson Strode wrote in New York Herald Tribune Books:

> Miss Bourke White's superb pictures are a remarkable testament to the tragic consequences of the pernicious system of sharecropping. The subjects are authentic and fairly selected. Some faces have become ennobled by suffering, some repulsively degenerate.(Strode, 1937, p. 5).

Stott said that the photographs were praised because You Have Seen Their Faces catered to the views of the public, or at least to those of its Northern liberal audience. Most of them thought that sharecroppers lived wretched lives. Bourke-White showed them what they expected to see (Stott, 1973, pp. 218-222).

Theodore M. Brown, author of Margaret Bourke-White, Photojournalist, offered a differing view:

> You Have Seen Their Faces deserved its accolades, since one is still deeply moved by the timeless quality of the Bourke-White photographs (Brown, 1972, p. 76).
>
> Of the many excellent photographers who documented poverty conditions during the 1930's, Bourke-White was among the few who did not flinch from the full implications of the subject; she placed a camera before shrivelled and warped bodies, the human refuse of a largely indifferent society. By way of comparison, Dorothea Lange . . . stopped short of revealing the deepest horror of her material. Seen through her eyes, deprivation was somewhat ennobling. . . . Bourke-White, the unsentimential witness, presented poverty as crippling and degrading (Brown, 1972, p. 73).

Was Bourke-White the unsentimential witness or the patronizing exploiter? There is an element of truth in both views. My informal content analysis, shown in Table 1, bears this out.

Table 1

Subjective Mood of the Photographs in *You Have Seen Their Faces*

Mood	%	#
very negative	5	4
the "look"	21	16
negative	16	12
moderately negative	21	16
neutral	31	23
moderately positive	1	1
positive	4	3
very positive	0	0

Stott wrote as if all of Bourke-White's have the "look:" a pitiful, pathetic expression. Only 21% have the "look."

Brown praised Bourke-White for showing the realities of poverty and despair. Forty-three percent of her photographs are negative, 64% if you count the "look" photographs, and all show poverty or despair. However, when Brown called Bourke-White an "unsentimential witness," he ignored the way she oversentimentalized the sharecroppers with the pitiful, pathetic "look" pictures.

Bourke-White was not an "unsentimential witness" to the suffering of the sharecroppers. Her intent was to arouse pity and she photographed her preconceived ideas. As a result of Bourke-White's purposes and field methods, the photographs in *You Have Seen Their Faces* are characterized by the "look:" the pitiful, pathetic expression. Only 21% are "look" photographs, but they are the more memorable ones. And another 43%, the negative photographs, also arouse pity. The effect of this 64% of the photographs is to emphasize the negative and to arouse emotion, by showing the pathetic and the deplorable. As a result, they diminish the sharecroppers by undermining their human dignity.

Captions: You Have Seen Their Faces

You Have Seen Their Faces contains a disclaimer: "The legends under the pictures are intended to express the authors' own conception of the sentiments of the individuals protrayed; they do not pretend to reproduce the actual sentiments of these persons" (Caldwell & Bourke-White, 1937, p. 6). However, all the captions are printed using quotation marks.

The purpose of the captions is to arouse emotion not to convey information. Again William Stott was critical:

> The captions quote people saying things they never said. The words Caldwell and Bourke-White put in the tenants' mouths made them as abject as possible. A sharecropper with a furrowed face and watering eyes was made to say: "A man learns not to expect much after he's farmed cotton all his life." The (ragged) woman on the (rotted) mattress: "Sometimes I tell my husband we couldn't be worse off if we tried." The last woman in the book: "I've done the best I knew how all my life, but it didn't amount to much in the end." The last man: "It ain't hardly worth the trouble to go on living."
>
> Caldwell and Bourke-White use ironic captions to sour the book's few "happy" pictures. . . . A bewhiskered man with an amiable bright eye, large grin, and no front teeth: "I get paid very well. A dollar a day when I'm working." (How low their expectations.) Negros picking cotton: "Bringing the white-boss's fine cotton along." (They don't even realize they are exploited.) The captions, like the rest of the book, reduce the lives and consciousness of the tenant farmers to force the audience to pity them. The subjects say either "Look at me, how wretched my life is," or "Look at me, my life is so wretched I don't even know it" (Stott, 1973, p. 221).

Even Bourke-White's biographer Theodore M. Brown was crtical:

> And use of the statements beneath the photographs was a mistake, since the collaborators broke the journalist's code by contriving quotations to match the subject and expression. Most of the verbal and visual juxtapositions are poignant, but credibility is reduced when one realizes that the statements are not authentic (Brown, 1972, p. 76).

Yet, some of the book reviews praised the captions. In his

article for The New Republic, Malcom Cowley quoted several of the captions and stated: "These quotations printed beneath the photographs are exactly right" (Cowley, 1937, p. 78). And The Commonweal called the captions: "Actual quotations from the sharecroppers" (Commonweal, 1937, p. 279).

It is hard to believe anyone could regard all the captions as actual quotations. In the series of photographs on the Holiness Church, one photograph shows a woman standing with her arms raised. The caption said: "Mildred has on a new pair of shoes today" (Caldwell & Bourke-White, 1937, p. 133). A pair of photographs showed women dancing and swaying in the front of the church. The caption read: "Mrs. Peterson is getting thinner" (Caldwell & Bourke-White, 1937, p. 135).

Some of the captions are condescending. A young black girl selling bait was labeled with: "She's caught so many crickets she's got so now she sets like one" (Caldwell & Bourke-White, 1937, p. 93). Another photograph showed a woman, perhaps, 25-30 years old, who was surrounded by four children. The caption said: "I never see my married children any more, but I suppose they have children of their own to take care of" (Caldwell & Bourke-White, 1937, p. 149). If those were her own words, the combination of words and pictures would be very strong. But the words belong to the authors.

William stott said:

> What a reader feels behind the photographs and captions in You Have Seen Their Faces is an imagination twisting the facts to squeeze the easiest and most maudlin emotions from them; a spirit that regards its craft, its effect, rather than its subject (Stott, 1973, p. 223).

The captions not only diminish the sharecroppers lives to achieve emotional impact, they also diminish and undermine the photographs. The captions destroy much of the credibility of the photographs by revealing the extent to which Caldwell and Bourke-White would go to wring every ounce of pity out of their subjects.

Text: You Have Seen Their Faces

Caldwell's text, like the photographs and captions, catered to public opinion. Since 1935, the sharecropper had received national attention in newspapers, magazines and films. "About farm tenancy his text made the 'usual liberal complaint,' as George Elliott thinks it: 'How awful this is. Aren't you ashamed that you let fellow Americans live like this?' That was the message his audience expected" (Stott, 1973, p. 220).

Most of the text was generalized. Like other writers, Caldwell criticized cotton-based agriculture, exploitive landlords and the Southern churches (Stott, 1973, p. 218). These criticisms are heated but with no specifics. The people are also described as generalized, representative types. He uses no quotations.

Caldwell seened to have decided to let Bourke-White's photographs carry the emotion, while his text provided generalized background information. However, he had no new insights and the text was so conventional that the book would never have been a success had it not "offered something new on the sharecropper: photographs" (Stott, 1973, p. 220).

The Book as a Whole: You Have Seen Their Faces

You Have Seen Their Faces carried an emotional impact, especially in its photographs and captions. However, it conveyed little information and nothing new in its generalized text and almost purely emotional photographs and captions. The patronizing treatment of the sharecroppers undermined their dignity and damaged the credibility of the book.

Today, You Have Seen Their Faces offers more information on the attitudes of Caldwell and Bourke-White than it offers on the sharecroppers. Bourke-White's photographs are stronger standing alone and without their captions, than they are with their captions in the context of the book. They are more believable out of context, than they are as a part of a book where the authors' preconceived ideas are so obvious.

Photographs: An American Exodus

Dorothea Lange's sympathies were with the poor, the unemployed, the migrants. We don't see the dregs of society because she had a "camera with a purpose" - to show people with "simple dignity" (Stott, 1973, 58-59).

Beaumont Newhall wrote that Lange

> found dignity, strength of character, and fortitude in the midst of suffering, and her remarkable ability to capture the human spirit so ennobled her photographs that many of them, though rooted in time and place, are timeless (Lange, 1967, p. 7).

William Stott wrote:

> Lange's finest photographs are of people, and these . . . show a tendency toward the sentimential. Everyone in her

photographs has character; nearly all are handsome. Yet - such is her greatness - few are simple. Again and again her people have an emotional complexity, an ambiguity, that breaks the stereotype and makes us look again. . . . Lange's people, like the real people they are, often surprise the viewer: a woman camping in the shade of a U.S. 80 billboard stands like a queen . . . a CIO organizer has the eye of a hired killer; a farmer who has lost and left everything in Nebraska is good-humored and paternal.

. . . But to say that she captured some of the ambiguous reality of her subjects is not to say that her photographs were not calculated to make her point.

Consider the "If You Die, You're Dead" picture of the tenant farmwife. . . . In the origional edition of American Exodus, the woman's image is enormous, overwhelming. It covers nearly the whole page. . . . her image is cropped at the waist so that she looms hugely before the viewer, presses herself and her anguish closely upon him. In the 1969 edition of American Exodus, this photograph . . . is recropped. We now see the woman to her knees. . . . she is a smaller and more distant figure. . . . She is no longer so overpowering. . . .

While the woman could serve as a object of useful pity, Lange heightened the emotion of her image. When she no longer could, Lange reduced it. . . . In her 1966 Museum of Modern Art retrospective, she included . . . a second portrait never shown before. Here, in close-up, the farmwife's . . . face is reposed. . . . Her chin and mouth are without hardness; her thoughtful eyes, though downcast, are at peace. . . . Taylor says that neither Lange nor he

> gave thought to including the second photograph in An American Exodus. The (first) photograph was made at the moment the woman spoke the words quoted, and neither of us doubted that this was the one that belonged in An American Exodus. The second photograph was made after she had uttered the quoted words, and was reflective rather than tortured.

. . . Lange's way of propaganda - a fastidious way - was through presentation and choice of images, rather than, like Bourke-White, through manipulation of the subjects (Stott, 1973, pp. 229-231).

Lange did have a point of view. She sought to show the dignity, the humanity of the migrants. She wanted to convey information but she also wanted to persuade. She wanted to move the government, the public to action by showing them people with

strength of character who need help.

The contemporary book reviews were very good. Daniel Aaron, writing in the Boston Evening Transcript, praised "the magnificent collection of photographs" (Aaron, 1940, p. 2). In The New Republic, Carey McWilliams wrote: "The photographs by Dorothea Lange are beyond praise" (McWilliams, 1940, p. 219).

Despite the praise, almost half (46%) of the photographs in An American Exodus were neutral record photographs as shown in Table 2. Many of Lange's best photographs were not published here. Only about 13% of the photographs capture strength of character amid suffering. Negative conditions or situations were shown in 42%, however, Lange does not show the people as pathetic.

Table 2

Subjective mood of the Photographs in An American Exodus

Mood	%	#
strength of character	13	14
positive	0	0
moderately positive	0	0
neutral	46	51
moderately negative	26	29
negative	16	18

William Stott quoted Paul Strand who wrote in Photo Notes:

> "There are some very fine photographs in the book. . . . yet the total impression does not have the impact on the eye and the mind which the subject surely contains. . . . in such a book as this the photographs must be the foundation material, provide the basic structure just as in documentary film.". . . The decision not to make the photographs the foundation of the book's structure led to "a very uneven" choice of pictures. . . . Where the level of the book fell off was in the use of some photographs "as mere record making" (Meltzer, 1978, pp. 210-211).

Lange made the decision to use the large number of neutral record photographs:

> "We were trying to spread information of a current condition, and the need to do something about it now. We wanted documentation saying, 'these are the actual conditions.'. . . And to that end, he (Taylor) went on, Dorothea 'was entirely willing that we should use any photographs. If the subject dictated that a certain photograph should be there, one that wouldn't meet the same artistic standard as some of the others that were there, that didn't bother her at all. The criterion for selection was: what were we trying to say and do in the book" (Meltzer, 1978, p. 194)?

In line with this decision, Lange did not use many of her stronger and more famous photographs. She also used nine photographs taken by other photographers because they made a particular point better. As a result, Lange's photographs were heavily weighted toward information, rather than arousing emotion like those of Bourke-White. Lange's photographs conveyed more information and more respect; but they did so at the price of sacrificing emotional impact.

Captions: An American Exodus

The impact of the captions was much stronger in An American Exodus than in You Have Seen Their Faces. Lange and Taylor brought a different standard to the captions. In the "Foreward" to An American Exodus, the authors stated:

> We adhere to the standards of documentary photography as we have conceived them. Quotations which accompany photographs report what the persons photographed said, not what we think might be their unspoken thoughts (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 6).

Taylor had the committment to objectivity of a social scientist and the desire to use quotations from the migrants to give those who read his reports a "feel" for conditions. Lange developed a committment to using quotations from working with

Taylor documenting migrants for the SERA:

> (Lange) wanted to get down their exact words. . . . She believed strongly in the use of those words. To her they were not a repetition of or an intrusion upon the images, but their extension: "What the right words can do for some photographs is enormous" (Meltzer, 1978, p. 97).

Lange and Taylor used quotations from migrants to caption Lange's photographs in their photo-text SERA reports called "Notes from the Field." The use of captions in An American Exodus is a natural extension of their earlier work.

The New York Times Book Review said: "An American Exodus is a book of photographs which are made even more vivid by the direct quotations from some of the men and women photographed" (New York Times Book Review, 1939, p. 4). The captions add impact to the photographs:

> A young sharecropper: "Hit's hard get-by. The land's just fit fer to hold the world together. . . .
> Neighbor: "A piece of meat in the house would like to scare these kids of mine to death" (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 14).

> A black man waiting at the Bridgehead Labor Market: "They come off the plantations 'cause they ain't got **nothin'** to do...They come to town and they still got nothin' to do" (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 34).

> Deserted Oklahoma farmstead: "No I didn't sell out back there. I give out" (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 99).

> Migrants harvesting carrots: "They'll sleep in the row (to hold a place in the field) to earn 60 cents a day" (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 115).

William Stott wrote that Lange and Taylor's captions were:

> Both more credible and more seemly than the abject despair Caldwell and Bourke-White forced on their subjects. . . . it shows a people still in command. . . . the quotations all show one kind of people, the wronged and strong. . . . surely the migrants were not all so tough and competent (Stott, 1973, pp. 228-229).

While the captions in An American Exodus have more credibility than those of Caldwell and Bourke-White they are not all direct quotations from the migrants. (See Table 3)

Table 3

Source of Captions in An American Exodus

Source	%	#
quotations from migrants, tenants, etc.	38	38
quotations from various writers	9	9
quotations from other sources	5	5
statements by the authors	48	48

Almost half (48%) of the captions are statements by the authors. Only 38% are quotations from migrants and others whom they met during their field trips.

Even the captions with the direct quotations are not totally objective. One photograph showed Dust Bowl conditions in Dallam County, Texas. It's caption read: "'Section after section dried up and blowed away.' - Refugee in California" (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 95). Lange and Taylor used their judgement when they matched this quotation to this photograph. Even if a person's own words were used to caption his or her photograph, the authors still used their judgement when they selected which of the words to quote.

Judgement was also used when the authors wrote statements to use as captions. Most were informative and factual. A photograph of a black man working on a tractor had a caption which read: "On this plantation only 30 families remain to work at day labor where 160 sharecropper families lived on the land. Twenty-two tractors and 13 four-row cultivators have replaced 130 families" (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 25). Some of their other statements

were short and subjective. A photograph of the torso of a man with tattered clothes and sun-darkened skin was captioned: "Hoe Culture" (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 10).

Overall, the captions are informative, credible and have an emotional impact. Like the photographs, the captions treat the migrants with respect and concern. Almost all of the photographs are stregthened by their captions, especially the neutral, record photographs. The photograph-caption juxtapositions are not as poignant as those in You Have Seen Their Faces, but they are more credible and this credibility gives them more impact.

Text: An American Exodus

Taylor's text, like that of Caldwell, was overshadowed in impact by the photographs and captions. Carey McWilliams, writing in The New Republic, said that the text was "quiet, scholarly, dispassionate, unassailably accurate . . . (but the photographs) are so good that the text is really not essential" (McWilliams, 1940, p. 219). William Stott said that Taylor "let the camera and the words of those photographed take care of the concrete while he generalized, often in ways tangential to the theme" (Stott, 1973, p. 227).

While sometimes redundant and not essential to the emotional impact of the book, the text provided useful background as the authors attempted to integrate into a unified context all the reasons and regions involved in the migration of farm families. And Taylor accurately predicted: "The real opportunity for large-scale absorption of the displaced must lie in the direction of

industrial expansion, not crowding them back onto the land where already they are surplus" (Lange & Taylor, 1939, p. 154).

The Book as a Whole: An American Exodus

An American Exodus conveyed information about the "human erosion" of farm families off the land and toward the West. Lange and Taylor presented their information primarily through the photographs and cutlines with the text providing some background information. They also treated the migrants with respect and emphasized their dignity. The most memorable photographs and captions showed people with strength of character despite suffering.

The emotional impact of the book derived from its photograph-caption combinations. The large number of neutral, record photographs undermined the impact. But, the captions stregthened almost every photograph, including the neutral records. And the use of actual quotations from the migrants added credibility to the photographs and to the book.

COMPARISONS

The following section summarizes the major findings while making comparisons between the authors, their approaches, and their books. These comparisons are considered at the end of the paper because of the difficulty of maintaining continuity while making comparisons.

Comparisons: Background

Margaret Bourke-White worked as an architectural, industrial, Fortune and advertising photographer before her decision to collaborate on the book project. Dorothea Lange was a portrait photographer, self-initiated documentary photographer and government documentary photographer.

After seeing the human suffering on the Great Plains during the 1934 drought, Bourke-White felt a need to understand people better. (Before, she had considered people something to place in the background of a scene for scale.) She was also growing disgusted with advertising photography.

Bourke-White decided she wanted to work on a book project, but she needed an idea and a writer. She found the idea and the writer in Erskine Caldwell.

Lange's desire to work on a book grew out of her documentary photography. Her sympathies with the unemployed led her to begin documenting the effects of the Depression in 1932. Beginning in 1935, Lange worked for the SERA, RA and FSA documenting migrant conditions. In 1938, she decided to work on a book on the migration of farm families, after three years of experience with the problem. It was her idea and she saw it as a natural for collaboration with Paul S. Taylor.

Erskine Caldwell was a writer of both fiction and reportage about Southern sharecroppers, including the controversial novel and play Tobacco Road. Paul S. Taylor was an economics professor and government consultant on migrant problems. Lange and Taylor

were married and had often worked together in the field before and after their marriage.

Both Bourke-White and Lange were moved by suffering they saw to begin documenting people. However, Bourke-White waited for two years after the drought story until she found a person with a book idea. Lange went into the streets of San Francisco, on her own time, to photograph the unemployed. By the time she decided to work on a book, Lange had a topic and she knew who she wanted to work with.

Comparisons: Purpose

The purpose of You Have Seen Their Faces was subjective: to show the plight of the Southern sharecropper, to show their pathetic faces, their deplorable living conditions, their wretched lives. The idea came from Caldwell. He wanted a photo-based book to prove that his fiction and reportage was accurately-based. Bourke-White, who was looking for an idea, was receptive.

The purpose of An American Exodus was more objective: to present information on a social problem, the migration of farm families, and to convey the need to take action. The idea for the book came from Lange, but the purpose was a shared one, the product of three years of working with Taylor on aspects of the problem.

Comparisons: Field Methods

Caldwell and Bourke-White's field methods were designed to gain access to people who they could use as subjects to express their preconceived ideas. Lange and Taylor's field methods were

based on gathering information, both written and photographic, and treating the migrants with respect.

Caldwell and Bourke-White developed their field methods during their single, summer-long field trip. Bourke-White learned from Caldwell's approach to people. Lange and Taylor developed their approach over three years of working together in the field. Lange, also, learned from Taylor, but she brought three years of her own documentary experience to the partnership.

Caldwell approached the sharecroppers, engaged them in conversation and eased their suspicions by adjusting his speech to their dialect. Bourke-White stayed in the background and photographed. She didn't talk much because of her "Yankee" accent.

Lange learned to photograph conditions in the streets by waiting until people ignored her presence. When she began documenting migrants with Taylor, he would approach them and conducted the interviews. At first, like Bourke-White, she stayed in the background and photographed. But, she soon learned to do it all herself: approaching, photographing and interviewing.

When Caldwell and Bourke-White "interviewed" sharecroppers, their primary purpose was not to gather information or gain insight. They primarily wanted to gain access to photographic subjects. Caldwell talked and listened, sometimes for hours, while Bourke-White watched and waited until their subjects' expressions or actions expressed their preconceived ideas. They wanted to show the deplorable conditions and the pathetic faces. People became subjects to manipulate to arouse pity.

Lange and Taylor, unlike Caldwell and Bourke-White, interviewed

and photographed the migrants to gather information. They wanted to understand the conditions, so they could pass on their knowledge in government reports. Photographs and quotations from interviews were used to humanize the statistics, to give their superiors a "feel" for conditions.

Because they tried to be accurate didn't mean they didn't have a point of view. Their sympathies were with the migrants. They treated them with respect. They didn't try to manipulate, but they were selective. They wanted to show the migrants as people who were down and out, who needed help, but who were not the dregs of society you could ignore.

Comparisons: Photographs

The photographs of both Bourke-White and Lange reflect their purposes and field methods.

Bourke-White's photographs prove she was not an unsentimental witness to the suffering of the sharecroppers. Her intent was to arouse pity and she photographed her preconceived ideas. As a result, Bourke-White's photographs in <u>You Have Seen Their Faces</u> are mostly negative and are characterized by the "look:" pitiful, pathetic expressions. Only 21% of the photographs have the "look," but they are the most memorable ones. Another 43% of the photographs are negative, showing degrading conditions and almost pathetic faces. They are different from the "look" photographs only in strength, but not in intent to arouse pity. The effect of this 64% of the photographs is to diminish the sharecroppers by undermining their human dignity.

Lange's photographs show her emphasis on conveying information. Where Bourke-White concentrated on faces and on arousing emotions, most of Lange's photographs place the people in the context of their environment. Even the emotion-arousing photographs convey information too, but 46% of the photographs are neutral records, informing the mind but not moving the emotions.

Lange's sympathies were with the migrants. She wanted to show them as people with problems who were worth helping because they were not the dregs of society. Thirteen percent of her photographs show the poor with almost ennobling dignity or strength of character. All her photographs treat the migrants respectfully. Even the 42% of the photographs that show negative conditions do not undermine the human dignity of their subjects.

In summary, Bourke-White's photographs are characterized by arousing pity and showing negative conditions, while Lange's photographs more often show simple dignity and convey information.

Comparisons: Captions

Caldwell and Bourke-White captioned all the photographs with their own thoughts written to sound like quotations from the sharecroppers themselves. They completed the deception by marking the captions with quotation marks. The effect is to destroy the credibility of the thoughts in the captions, which might be accurate, and to also undermine the credibility of the photographs and the whole book.

Lange and Taylor recorded the words of the people they talked to and photographed, so they could use quotations in the captions.

Thirty-eight percent of the captions were quotations from migrants, 15% were quotations from other sources, and 48% were statements by the authors.

Almost all the captions in You Have Seen Their Faces were written by Caldwell and Bourke-White to make their subjects sound as pitiful as possible. The pathetic "look" photographs became even more abject. Even the neutral and the few positive photographs were captioned to diminish their subjects.

Almost all the captions in An American Exodus, both quotations and statements by the authors, add information to and strengthen the emotional impact of the photographs and of the entire book. The use of actual captions adds to the credibility of the photographs and the book. Yet, the captions weren't totally objective. Lange and Taylor had a point of view. Where Caldwell and Bourke-White's point of view was blatant, Lange and Taylor's was subtle. Almost all the migrants sound "wronged and strong," the product of selectivity by Lange and Taylor.

Comparisons: Text

Caldwell's text offered the reader nothing new. It was merely a restatement of earlier observations, the "usual liberal complaints."

Taylor's text did offer something new. He was the first to attempt to integrate (although briefly) all the reasons and regions involved in the westward migration of farm families. He also foresaw the need for industrial expansion to provide a market for the excess farm labor.

Both authors provided background information to clarify the

photographs and both were overshadowed in emotional impact by the photographs and captions. The effect of Caldwell's criticisms were blunted by his use of generalized situations and representative types, and by the absence of quotations. Taylor's text was even more generalized and briefer.

Comparisons: The Book as a Whole

You Have Seen Their Faces has more emotional impact than An American Exodus, but Caldwell and Bourke-White went too far with their preconceived ideas. Their intent was too obvious. The photographs and captions make the sharecroppers seem too pathetic and their lives too wretched. The falsified "quotation" captions combined with the pathetic "look" photographs destroy the book's credibility.

An American Exodus conveys more information than You Have Seen Their Faces, but it needs more emotional impact. Almost all the photographs and captions present information, but there are far too many neutral record photographs (48%). The captions play the strongest role in the book, consistently adding information and strengthening the photographs, and adding credibility to the entire book.

The biggest difference between An American Exodus and You Have Seen Their Faces, is that Lange and Taylor consistently respect the dignity of their subjects. Lange's strongest photographs are the 13% which show strength of character amid suffering, while Bourke-White's strongest photographs are the 21% which have the pitiful, pathetic "look." Where 38% of the captions in An American

Exodus are quotations from migrants, all of the captions in You Have Seen Their Faces are the authors' thoughts written to sound like quotations from the sharecroppers. Even in Lange's photographs showing negative conditions or situations, the migrants are not made to look pathetic.

In effect, Caldwell and Bourke-White based You Have Seen Their Faces on a purpose which says to the reader: "Pity them. See how wretched their lives are." While, Lange and Taylor based An American Exodus on a purpose which tells the reader: "Respect them. Understand them. They are down and out, but they are worthy of your help."

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